

Sinus Infection (Sinusitis)

Do I need an appointment?

Most people with acute sinusitis will get better on their own and **don't** benefit from an office visit. The majority of sinus infections are viral and do not respond to antibiotics. Most people with sinusitis recover on their own, even if the infection is bacterial.

What is a Sinus Infection?

A sinus infection (also called Acute Sinusitis) is the swelling of the lining of the sinuses. Sinuses are air chambers in the bones around your eyes, cheeks and nose. They are connected to the nasal passages. Sinuses make mucous, a fluid that cleans bacteria and other particles out of the air you breathe.

It is common for sinusitis to develop after you've had a cold or nasal allergy. Viruses (and less commonly, bacteria) can get trapped in the sinuses, causing a sinus infection. Acute sinusitis can last up to 2 to 4 weeks.

Sinus infections often present with many of the same signs and symptoms of a cold. Common signs and symptoms of a sinus infection include:

- A cold that starts to get better, then worsens.
- Pain or pressure in the face - this often feels worse when leaning forward.
- Discomfort in the upper teeth or pain in teeth while chewing.
- Stuffy nose combined with thick yellow, green or grey nasal discharge (may be worse on one side).
- Sore throat, coughing, fatigue.
- Low-grade fever is also possible.

When to Call the WCFHT

Most people with sinusitis recover without medical care. However, if you or a person you care for have any of the following signs or symptoms, call us for advice.



The above symptoms AND:

- Fever that occurs after day 5
- Sudden and severe pain in the face and head
- Symptoms get better at first but then get worse.
- Illness lasting more than 10 days with no improvement or worsening of symptoms

Go to the Emergency Department (or call 911) if you or your child:

- Has trouble seeing, or seeing double
- Has trouble thinking clearly
- Swelling or redness around 1 or both eyes
- Stiff neck

What can I do to feel better?

The majority of people will recover at home without any medical treatment. The following therapies may be used for symptoms:

- Drink plenty of fluids to help loosen mucus. Sip hot liquids.
- Apply moist heat to your face (using a warm, damp towel or gel pack) to help ease the pain. Apply it for 5 to 10 minutes, as needed.
- Sinus irrigation with saline solution (such as a Neti Pot or NeilMed sinus rinse) may help to ease symptoms.
- Nasal decongestant spray (no longer than 3 days - talk to your pharmacist). After each use, lie down on your back and hang your head backward over the end of your couch or bed, turning your head side to side while sniffing, to distribute the decongestant.

Note: DO NOT use decongestant if you have heart disease or high blood pressure. Not recommended for children.

- For pain relief: use acetaminophen (ie. Tylenol) or ibuprofen (ie. Advil, Motrin) Please consult your Pharmacist for the safest option prior to use if you take any other medications.
- Avoid using antihistamines (they may thicken mucus).

Children:

- Offer pain relievers like acetaminophen (ie. Tylenol) or ibuprofen (ie. Advil or Motrin). Never give more than the recommended dose.
- Rinse your child's nose and sinuses with salt water a few times a day
- Make sure that your child drinks plenty of fluids – Staying hydrated might help thin the mucus and make it drain more easily.
- Do not give your child cold or allergy medicines for sinusitis. Those medicines could make your child's symptoms worse. Plus, cold medicines are not safe for children younger than 6. Never give Aspirin to children under 18.

How can I protect myself and others and prevent acute sinusitis?

Frequent hand washing can help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses that can cause sinusitis, especially from young children. Cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue.

If you get a cold or other respiratory illness and develop nasal congestion, treat it promptly to prevent sinusitis.

Avoid breathing in smoke, dry air or anything that may trigger your allergies if you have allergies. Using a humidifier can help prevent acute sinusitis.

If you do make an appointment to be seen by a Health Care Provider in office please ensure you:

- Check in with our reception team as soon as you arrive. For the safety of other patients and staff upon check-in our reception team will provide you a mask which we ask you to wear for the duration of your time in the office.
- Depending on your symptoms they may direct you to be seated in our isolation room where the provider will conduct your visit.
- Use hand sanitizer to sanitize hands throughout your visit. Hand sanitizer pumps are found throughout the office for patient use.
- Distance yourself from other patients in the waiting room as much as possible.